

Hello. My name is Tom Cadden and I am a direct support professional at CCARC, located in New Britain CT, and have been for the last 12 years. I am currently working as a 1:1, but I have previously worked as a general DSP. Everyday I, along with my co-workers, perform a number of tasks to help our individuals live the best life that they can. These tasks include, but are not limited to, Med passes, behavior management and tracking, feedings, changes, paperwork, van runs, trainings, attendance tracking, community outings, planning trips, making a weekly and monthly calendar, and probably the most important task we provide, being a friend to the most vulnerable individuals in our society. This job is very fulfilling in many ways, but unfortunately it does not keep up with other jobs as far as financial compensation. This is one of the reasons this field has such a high turnover rate. Many people in this field have to take on an additional job, or even two just to pay the bills. The livable wage for a person with one kid in Connecticut is 32.01. Most DSP's in Connecticut make 16.50. This is just over HALF of what it takes to live in Connecticut. I have to ask, does this seem fair?

We are responsible for the well being of many individuals whose families trust us to make the lives of their loved ones safe and fulfilled. This is not easy to do when you have to work an extra shift, or two and still have to worry about having enough money to pay rent. When workers in this field leave for a better paying job, not because they want to, but because they need to it creates a very high turnover rate. When you work with individuals who are naturally anxious, and or vulnerable this is not ideal. When individuals have to constantly get use to new staff it creates numerous issues. One of which is sadness. Many of or individuals don't understand that most people working in this field have financial responsibilities that this job doesn't meet. All they see is another person exiting their life and they don't know why. Its truly a sad situation.

I implore you to do everything you can to responsibly compensate DSP's in the private sector.

Thank You,
Tom Cadden

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